

Beautiful Lakeland

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"Who comes not hither
Ne'er can know,
How beautiful
The world below."

—Wordsworth.

By Ashley P. Abraham.



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Near Ferry Nab, Windermere
"An August Afternoon."

Beautiful Lakeland

By ASHLEY P. ABRAHAM

Nature I'll court in her sequestered haunts,
By mountain, meadow, streamlet, grove or dell,
Where the poisèd lark his evening ditty chants,
And health, and peace, and contemplation dwell.

—*Smollett.*

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By G. P. ABRAHAM, F.R.P.S., Keswick.

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Beautiful Lakeland.

CHAPTER I.

An Appreciation : The Cause and History of Lakeland.

IT may be fearlessly asserted that those portions of the counties of Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire known as the Lake District, contain more natural beauty, more literary associations and more diversity of charm than any other similar area of the whole of the Earth's surface.

Within the small space of thirty square miles, scenes of the wildest grandeur and the most tranquil beauty exist side by side. From the grim recesses of Scawfell and Great Gable one can pass in two or three hours to the placid haunts of Windermere. The stern solitudes of Wastwater can be visited upon the same day as the peaceful shores of Derwentwater, "set like a gem amid the encircling hills."

The moors and bare corries of Scotland, the foliage-clad slopes and llyns of North Wales, the lakes and valleys of Switzerland, all have their counterpart and seem to meet in Lakeland. Indeed, the diversity of the landscape in so small a tract of country is nothing short of marvellous. This diversity is perhaps the feature that first impresses a stranger, but almost at the same time the compactness of the whole claims his notice. Here one picture succeeds another without

Beautiful Lakeland.

pause. Half an hour's walk will accomplish as great a change as would half a day's walk in most of the other beauty spots of the country.

It is no doubt a fact that there are isolated prospects elsewhere which are as beautiful and impressive as these, but in most cases they are separated by tracts of intervening country which are deadly dull. Here is no dulness. The feasts of beauty are as great on the way from Derwentwater to Ullswater, or between Coniston and Windermere, as they are at these prospects themselves. The indefinable line of beauty is omnipresent. From end to end and from side to side of this favoured spot there is scarcely an unlovely feature, if we except the quarries and mines which mar some few localities.

It may be thought that because the higher mountains barely top three thousand feet the sense of space and immensity will be lacking. But really this is not so. The truth is that the proportions of a mountain are determining factors of greater moment than its mere height in feet or its bulk. Who that has traversed Kirkstone Pass or skirted the edge of Buttermere on a hazy August day, can doubt this? The atmospheric conditions of Lakeland lend a sense of altitude and suggestiveness such as the clearer air of great mountain ranges rarely conveys. This exquisiteness of proportion impressed Wordsworth so greatly that he actually compared the beauties of Lakeland with those of Switzerland, and, needless to say, our homeland lost very little in the comparison. Wordsworth may be thought to be a biassed authority, yet it is the repeated testimony of a very great number of travellers that, whilst they have seen wilder, more sublime and grander scenes elsewhere, they have seen nothing so beautiful as Lakeland.

And such is my own impression. My vocation takes me for a month or two every year to Switzerland, yet not a summer passes but I return from the glacier world of the great Alps feeling, as Penrith is neared and glimpses of the Langdale Pikes and the sweep of St. Sunday's



Grasmere and the Island
"At Evening."

Lakeland in the making.

Crags over Ullswater are caught, that I have seen nothing better in all my wanderings abroad. Indeed, it ought to have been Lakeland's own poet, and not Kingsley, who wrote

“ While we see God's signet
Fresh on English ground,
Why go gallivanting
With the nations round ? ”

It is hardly the province of a work like the present to treat of the geology of this beautiful district, but it may prove of interest to touch concisely upon the processes which have conduced to the formation of such a wonderful whole.

Why are Skiddaw and several of the hills in the north of Lakeland rounded in contour and possessed of no precipices worthy the name? What accounts for the cliffs and jagged outlines of the Langdale Pikes, the Pillar, or Scawfell? Wherefore all the various beautiful and retiring dales and side valleys, and, most pregnant question of all, whence came the Lakes themselves? No appreciative or thoughtful visitor but must have pondered upon these things and been somewhat puzzled. Many, I know, have dismissed the matter by concluding that the whole district is due to some vast upheaval of bygone ages. No such simple explanation will cover all the facts.

The earliest causes of Lakeland were complex and various. It has several times been submerged beneath the sea, when layer upon layer of mud and sediment was deposited to the thickness of thousands of feet. Skiddaw, Saddleback and others of our Northern fells are composed of these layers of soft rock. Weathering processes have rounded their contours and left to them the graceful flowing outlines which we now admire. Volcanoes also have played no unimportant part. Violent eruptions took place near Keswick and to the south of it and ejected material—boulders, huge masses of rock and fine

The Glacial Period.

dust — the greater part of which fell again almost vertically and deposited rock to the depth of at least twelve thousand feet. This has since been exposed to climatic influences, and been greatly reduced in bulk. The mountains of Borrowdale, Scawfell and Great Gable, amongst others, are formed of this volcanic *débris*; hence their hard, jagged and precipitous nature. A great part of them was ejected from Castle Head, the favourite view-point above Keswick, which is beyond doubt the crater of an extinct volcano.

Thus we see that the Lake District is mainly composed of two different kinds of rocks, one of a clayey and easily-moulded nature, the other of an unyielding volcanic type, jagged and angular. It is very greatly due to the juxtaposition of these two different types that the Lake District possesses such diversity of outline. So much for the rocks of which the mountains are formed. But how came they to assume their present shapes? The answer is fairly simple. The Lake District, as we know it to-day, was quite recently, that is in a geological sense (a little matter of ninety-three million years ago!) a vast dome-like tract situated about four-thousand feet above the level of the surrounding country. After it had finally emerged from the sea, rain in torrents fell upon this dome. Rivers were formed. These followed the usual downward course of water, and as they flowed they slowly wore definite channels for themselves. Down these channels they swept, carrying with them small pebbles and earth which wore away the softer rocks underneath. This went on for millions upon millions of years. Hundreds of streams flowing in various directions, eating the rock out and bearing it in minute particles to the sea, left the higher grounds untouched and it is these higher grounds which we now know as the mountains of Lakeland.

And now as regards the Lakes themselves. Influences into



The Old Mill, Ambleside

History of Lakeland.

which it would be tedious to enquire led to the warm winds and waters of the Gulf Stream being cut off from the district. The atmosphere became intensely cold. Instead of warm rain as heretofore, snow fell. This heaped up thicker and thicker until it compressed into ice which, in the form of glaciers, began to slide down the valleys previously hollowed out by the streams. The great Glacial Period set in. The glaciers tore up stones, earth and rocks and carried them along in their course. These great file-like masses of rock-embedded ice scooped out huge hollows in the river beds beneath.

Then the Gulf Stream again brought its benignant influence to bear upon the district. Warmth came and rain fell again. The glaciers began slowly to melt and disappear: the rivers resumed their normal flow. At once the great hollows were filled with water and it was these water-filled hollows which first constituted our lakes. Since that time the lakes have in many cases been altered in shape. For instance, Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite were in times past one lake, but the *débris* brought down and deposited by the river Greta has divided it into the two beautiful sheets of water with which we are now familiar. Incidentally, the glaciers had a great influence upon the shape and contours of our mountains, rounding, polishing and smoothing them into their present forms.

Such is a very incomplete *resumé* of the happenings of by-gone æons which have given to us our lovely district.

It would be pleasing could we follow its history with such certainty, but this is where Lakeland falls short. Of legend, folklore and historic records it possesses comparatively little. In early times this wildly secluded corner of England was given over for the most part to swamps, wild beasts and dense forest. Its earliest inhabitants were the Brigantes, one of the tribes of aboriginal Britons. Tacitus mentions them in a half-hearted uncertain manner and their dealings

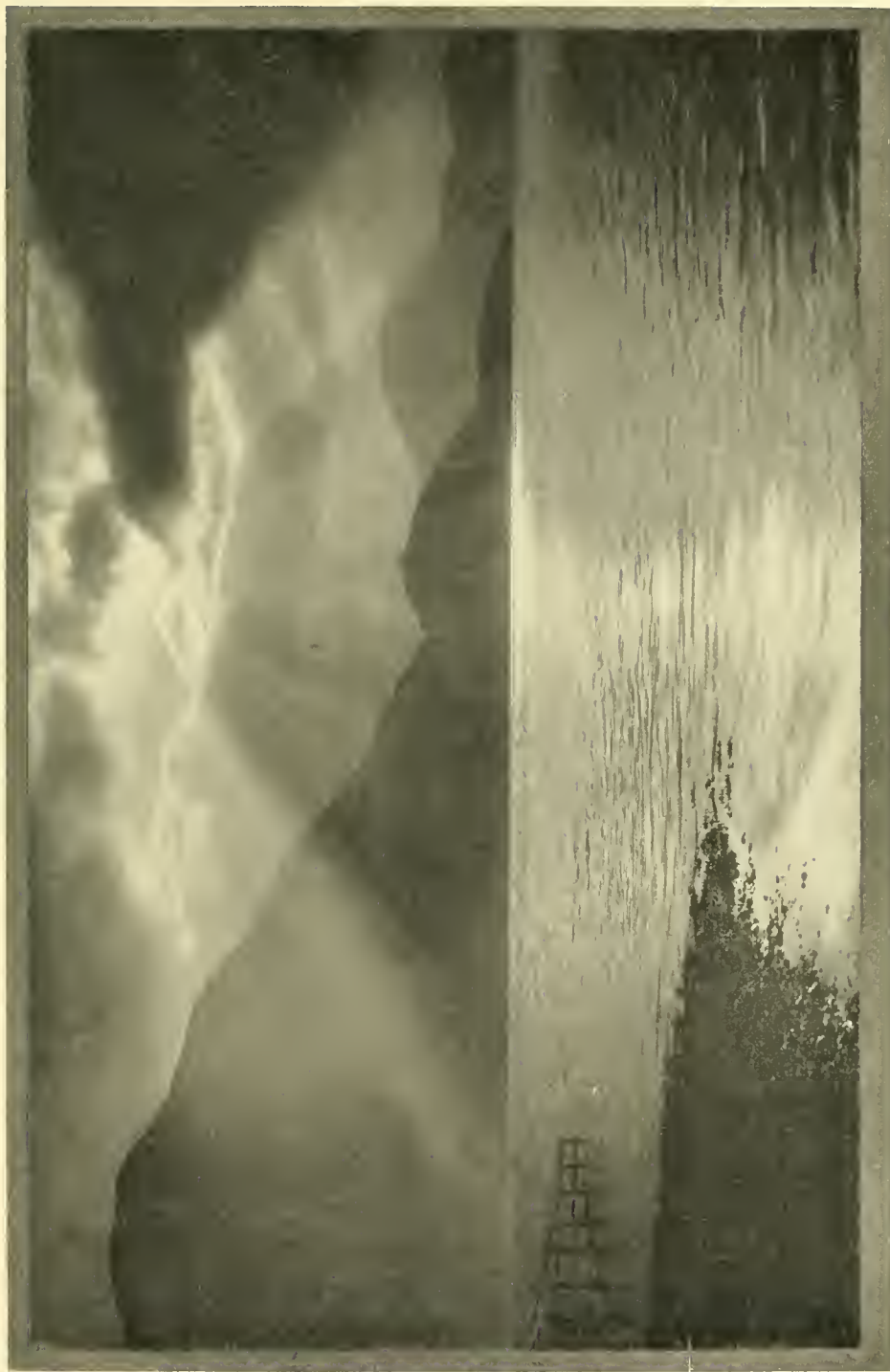
King Dunmail's Last Fight.

with the Romans, but as to the extent to which they occupied the district, or in what numbers, is not known. Several of the local names of villages and mountains were given by them, and these place-names, together with some few relics, are the strongest confirmation we have of the existence here of these early Britons.

The Romans who followed after them left numerous proofs of their occupation—bridges, roads, stations and various articles of household use. What the Romans did in Lakeland is not clear. Perchance they were enticed here by the suspected mineral wealth of the mountains, or were engaged in subduing the savage Brigantes. Perhaps, being cultivated people, they rowed about on Windermere, held pic-nics on Belle Isle or lazed about the countryside admiring the beauties of nature! All this is the merest conjecture.

After the Romans had left Britain, and the Danes and Saxons had usurped the rest of England, the Lake District was probably held by the Lakeland Britons as one of their last strongholds and places of refuge. The tourist passing over Dunmail Raise—the high pass between Grasmere and Thirlmere—is shown to this day the heap of stones marking the grave of Dunmail, the last of the Cumbrian Kings. Near here, in the year 945, he and his gallant band gave battle to the Saxon King Edmund. Dunmail held the high ground for some considerable time, fighting valiantly until he was treacherously attacked in the rear and ultimately cut down. Thus disappeared the Britons from Lakeland. So goes the story, and the heap of stones on Dunmail Raise certainly gives local confirmation. It is said, also, that Dunmail's crown was sunk in Grisedale Tarn, but here corroborative evidence is lacking for it has not yet been recovered.

Under the Heptarchy, Cumberland and Westmoreland no doubt witnessed their share of border warfare, but at this time, and for long after the Norman Conquest, the Lake District itself appears to have



The Middle Reach of Ullswater

"After Rain."

The First of the Tourists.

been the abode of outlaws and was practically unvisited. Later, the Abbots of Furness allotted great portions of land in their domain to their "villeins." This gave a lead to the Feudal Lords who gradually followed suit, and thus the outlying parts of the district became dotted with farms and homesteads. These ultimately encroached further and further into the mountains.

With nobody to dispute their ownership, these "small holders" built stone walls up the mountain sides to mark the boundary of their claim and to form enclosures for their stock. These walls, hundreds of years old and apparently meaningless to us to-day, still form a very characteristic feature of the scenery. It may be thought by some that they are a disfigurement, but if so this is due to the cutting down of much timber and woods which no doubt formerly hid them from view. In any case they are grey, lichen-covered, and in entire keeping with the district. From this period onward, whilst guarding their homes and possessions from predatory bands of freebooters, the Lakeland yeomen or "statesmen" steadily improved their holdings, cleared the forests, reclaimed the marshes and gradually gave to the countryside the aspect it wears to-day.

It was about the year 1700 that people first began to take an interest in its scenery, the poet Gray being, in 1767, the first person of note to visit it. His writings and descriptions of the scenery did much to make it known to the outside world. Indeed, he was the real discoverer of Lakeland, the precursor of those bands of tourists who, in yearly increasing numbers, visit it for the sole purposes of feasting upon its beauty and drinking in its elevating and healthful influences.

CHAPTER II.

Windermere and Ambleside.

WINDERMERE recalls the name of one who made it peculiarly his own—that genial-hearted philosopher, Christopher North (Professor Wilson), who has left on record that “the best time to visit it is from January 1st to December 31st.” A true lover of our largest lake, he also said that “it has the widest breadth of water, the richest foreground of wood, and the most magnificent background of mountains, not only in Westmoreland, but, believe us, in the whole world.”

Although perhaps some of us may consider that the worthy Professor's enthusiasm carried him too far, few will deny that as a combination of wood, mountains and water, Windermere, when surveyed from certain aspects, would be difficult to surpass. It is probably the most famous of all the lakes. Many people, upon being asked if they know the Lake District answer in the affirmative, but further questioning often elicits the fact that they have only been to Windermere. Yet they have not been disappointed; and little wonder, for this lake and its surroundings form a good summary of Lakeland. Here we have sylvan beauty in perfection, dignity lent by some of our shapeliest mountains, the peculiar impression of “ancient homeliness” that most of the lakes convey, wooded islands and seductive creeks and bays, a wealth of colouring and, to complete the summary, many associations of the Lakes Poets.

The best way to see Windermere, and indeed to enter Lakeland at all, is to board one of the Furness Railway Company's comfortable



Windermere

Looking south from Orrest Head, with Furness Fells behind, and Lake Side, the entrance to Lakeland from the south, in the far distance. On the left is the village of Windermere.



The Langdale Pikes

And the New Dungeon Ghyll Hotel.

A Sail up Windermere.

steam yachts at Lakeside. This is the entrance to the district from the south. The pastoral, comparatively tame country hereabouts is a fitting introduction to the more impressive scenery which meets us as we sail up the lake towards Bowness and Waterhead. The steamers run in connection with the trains and the pier is alongside the railway station. The view up the lake gives promise of the good things to come. A wide expanse of water, with luxuriant woods running down to its very edge, and in the distant blue the fells of Lakeland! Hereabouts the lake is very narrow; in fact it is literally "Wooded Winandermere, the river-lake" of the poet.

For a mile or so after starting, the scene changes but little and then gradually it unfolds itself like the opening petals of some gorgeous flower. The shoulder of the "mighty Helvellyn" thrusts its bare mass above the trees on the left; further round is the flat-topped Fairfield mountain, then the rounded back of Red Screes dominated by the High Street Range and the conical spur of Ill Bell. These are the dim blue fells we noticed from Lakeside. If we keep a sharp eye above the wooded ridge on our left, Finsthwaite Heights, we shall catch a glimpse of the top of Coniston Old Man. This has hardly disappeared before, looking up to our left front, the Langdale Pikes are momentarily seen—an elusive little peep which causes us to keep a look out for them as we sail further up the lake. They are the shapeliest and most distinctive mountains to be seen from Windermere; indeed, it is the opinion of many that Lakeland itself has nothing more beautiful to show than these Twin Peaks.

On our right the white walls of Storrs Hall gleam through the trees. It is now a hotel, but it will always be reminiscent of the historic occasion when Wordsworth, Southey and Christopher North foregathered here to welcome Sir Walter Scott and Canning to a yachting regatta held in honour of the "great Northern Minstrel." Ere

Belle Isle.

long the islands claim our attention and then we touch at the Ferry, "one of the sweetest spots on Windermere." The steam ferry-boat which plies all day long from shore to shore, carrying objects of all possible descriptions—pedestrian and otherwise—motor cars, carts and char-a-bancs, possesses an antiquity that renders it in keeping with the surroundings.

After leaving the Ferry pier we pass the largest of the islands, Belle Isle, with the cupola of a residence peeping through the trees. The islands, apart from their picturesqueness, supply one of the few "stirring incidents" that have happened hereabouts. On Belle Isle, Major Robert Philipson, locally known as "Robin the Devil," withstood for eight months a siege carried on by a certain Colonel Briggs, an officer in Cromwell's army and a magistrate of Kendal. Briggs ultimately failed to apprehend the gallant major and tiring of his job, withdrew to Kendal. Major Philipson followed him with a small body of picked men. They reached Kendal on a Sunday and all its inhabitants had gone to church. Not quite all, however, for Philipson went to church and, to the surprised horror of the congregation, rode his horse up one aisle and down the other in quest of his enemy; but Briggs was not there, a defection which no doubt saved his life. Philipson had reached the door again in safety when someone, plucking up courage, made a grab at his girth and succeeded in unhorsing the daring intruder. Him the major killed on the spot, succeeded in regaining his girthless saddle, mounted and was away through the church porch without further hindrance, and thence to Windermere. His head violently struck the top of the doorway as he dashed out, however, and his helmet was knocked to the ground. This was all his assailants-secured, and until quite recently it hung, as a voucher for the truth of the story, in one of the aisles of Kendal Church.

To resume our sail, the pretty little village of Bowness and the



Windermere from Furness Fell

The large island is Belle Isle, Bowness being on the far shore, with the village of Windermere on the hill above.

Bowness and Windermere.

ivy-clad, but in every way modern and first-class Old England Hotel are now in sight, with the town of Windermere above it on the hillside. As we near the pier the view opens out wonderfully and distracts our attention from the red-cushioned rowboats, electric launches, yachts, promenade and other paraphernalia that go to make up the bustling foreshore of Bowness. From the steamer deck will be noticed, peeping over the top of the boathouses, the tower of Saint Martin's Church, an ancient structure well worth a visit, if only to see the remains of a chancel window which originally graced Furness Abbey—

“All garlanded with carven imagerie
And diamonded with panes of quaint device.”

The village itself is not lacking in distinctive qualities, the juxtaposition of the antique and the modern in architecture being certainly very quaint. Its up-to-date and well-kept shops and hotels and general air of cleanliness, are features of the place. It is a favourite “excursion” centre and rightly so, for most of the outlying districts are within easy reach—a remark that applies also to Windermere village. They are now-a-days almost one town, although the nucleus of each is over a mile apart. Houses and shops line the connecting road,—a steady climb up the hill, almost continuously, to Windermere Railway Station. Above the station is the eminence of Orrest Head, one of the most excellent view-points in the whole of Lakeland. It was this prospect that inspired the words which introduce this chapter. Those who walk up Orrest Head on a fine summer's day will certainly condone, and some will endorse, this description by Christopher North.

The natives of Windermere are the direct descendants of those sturdy independent sons of the soil, the Westmerian statesmen. They perpetuate many of the best qualities of their forebears, and in spite of contact with a polyglot tourist element they also retain much of their original dialect. Only the other day I ventured to ask the opinion

Waterhead.

of one them regarding the weather. The old dalesman looked knowingly to windward and then delivered himself as follows: "Weel, it'll mappen donk an' dezzle a la'al bit, mappen kest a snifter, but there'll be neah gurt pelt," which was his way of saying that it would perhaps drizzle a bit, perhaps throw a shower, but there would be no great downpour!

But our steamer does not stay long enough to permit of much divergence, and we are soon out on the quiet water again, making for the head of the Lake. Every hundred yards now enhances the beauty of the scene. The mountains draw nearer, the details of the craggy shoulders of Wetherlam and the fine crest of Bowfell can be well seen. With the Langdale Pikes beyond, and the slopes of Wansfell Pike and the Troutbeck Hundreds a-head, they rivet one's attention almost entirely until, after rounding a promontory, we come in sight of the Scotch firs and pier of Low Wood. The signal to call is lacking, so our vessel keeps steadily on up the lake passing Wray Castle, a picturesque, but not historical building, on our left, and on our right the tree-embowered cottage called "Dove Nest." This was for some time the home of the gentle Mrs. Hemans who, having visited Wordsworth in 1830, could not resist the call of the beauty and solitude of Lakeland. Her descriptions of Windermere and "Dove Nest" are amongst the most spontaneous and charming word-paintings which even Lakeland has evoked, and of course this is saying a good deal. All too soon now we realize that we are at our journey's end and that the jetty on the right, past the row of somewhat pretentious-looking lodging houses, is Waterhead. It is worth remembering that there is only one thing better than this first sail up Windermere and that is . . . to repeat the performance! Certain it is that some fresh beauty, some added interest will disclose itself on the occasion of each trip.

A mile from the head of the lake is the thriving little town of



Waterhead, Windermere

In the foreground is the Furness Railway Company's steamer pier, whence passengers are landed for Ambleside, about one mile distant. The Langdale Pikes and Bowfell show to advantage in the background.



Ambleside

From the shoulder of Loughriggs, showing Wansfell Pike behind.

Ambleside.

Ambleside. Beautifully situated on the hillside above the murmuring Rothay, it is one of the best places for the tourist to "pitch his tent," as the Romans undoubtedly did many centuries ago. Several remains of a Roman station have been unearthed in the fields at the head of Windermere—urns, coins and fragments of tessellated pavement, amongst other things—but the traces to be found now-a-days are very slight.

Ambleside has considerable claims to beauty, not only in itself and the irregularity and picturesqueness of its buildings, but in its immediate surroundings. The short walks to be made from it are unsurpassable, that through Rothay Park, past Fox Howe, the home of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby School memory, and across the old stepping stones near by, being simply charming. To those of a more strenuous turn of mind the walk up to Sweden Bridge affords a variety of scenery, "from gay to grave, from lively to severe," difficult to surpass even in this land of quick transitions. Then there is Loughrigg, the ridgy fell on the opposite side of the Rothay, which commands the whole sylvan length of Windermere Lake to the south, with the wild recesses of Langdale, enclosed by the Pikes, Crinkle Crag and the massive buttressed peak of Bowfell away to the west. There are several other walks of equal beauty and interest, and Stock Ghyll Force, in the beautiful glen above the little town, must not be forgotten.

Many coaching excursions start from the Queen's and Salutation Hotels at Ambleside; the scene in the Market Square on any morning in the season at about ten o'clock is one of great bustle and stir. Coniston, Ullswater and Derwentwater, with intermediate beauty spots, are within easy driving distance. The congregated vehicles range from the six-horsed char-a-banc for Kirkstone Pass, and the old-world stage-coaches to the more pretentious and hackneyed landau; to say nothing

Ambleside.

of motors of all sorts and sizes. That calm, introspective frame of mind which people seek and often find at the Lakes will be wooed in vain in Ambleside Market Square when the excursionists are getting "under way."



Stock Ghyll Force, Ambleside



Grasmere Lake and Village

The "Peaceful Vale" of Wordsworth, seen from Hunting Stile, with Seat Sandal and Rydal Fell behind.

CHAPTER III.

Grasmere and Rydal.

GRASMERE has been called the heart of the Lake District, and not without good reason. As a centre for driving or walking it is ideal, for it is situated within an easy day's march of nearly all the lakes. The summits of most of the higher mountains can be attained and Grasmere again be reached by nightfall.

In itself the vale of Grasmere, a happy mixture of beauty and domesticity, with its pretty little lake and surrounding mountains dotted here and there with farmsteads, cottages and villas, has strong claims upon the tourist. In addition to its innate beauty, it possesses the distinction of being the home of Lakeland's richest literary associations. Not a nook or corner in it but breathes the memory of the Lake Poets, for it was here that the greatest of them lived, worshipped and died. William Wordsworth chose this spot for his home. First at the cottage at Town End, then at Allan Bank and ultimately at Rydal Mount, but a very short distance away, he "communed with solitude" and gave to the world the beautiful poems which have done so much to immortalize both Lakeland and himself.

To the tourist who passes through on the main road in the day's excursion, Grasmere and Rydal are beautiful—perhaps delectable is a better word—but to see them properly and rightly to appreciate them, it is necessary to stroll along the fellsides by which they are overlooked. At the northern end of Rydal a wooden bridge crosses the stream—Rothay Beck, which joins Grasmere and Rydal—and gives access to

Grasmere Church.

a path known as Loughrigg Terrace. This was one of Wordsworth's favourite walks, and as we follow along the breast of Loughrigg Fell and gaze down upon Grasmere, with its rich cordon of mountains and woods, we can easily realize the influences which chained a man of his temperament to this vale. Away at the far end of the lake is the little village with its square-towered church, in whose God's Acre he is laid to rest. Beyond and above it is the gap in the mountains called Dunmail Raise, the entrance to Grasmere from the north. To the right of it rise the bare shoulders of Helvellyn and Seat Sandal; to the left Helm Crag—with its shattered rock summit—and further round the wildly secluded valley of Easedale, bounded by the wooded slopes of Silverhow. Truly a scene of singular charm!

Grasmere Church is the chief object of attraction in the valley. A quaint old edifice, its once time-weathered beauty has now been greatly marred by a coating of cement, rendered necessary by the ravages of time and a congregation which prefers to worship in a dry building. The inside of the church is quite old-time, however, and Wordsworth's lines are still true in every detail,

“Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy for duration built,
With pillars crowded and the roof upheld
By naked rafters intricately crossed.”

The rest of the description is in the fifth book of “The Excursion.” On the north side of the nave is a tablet to Wordsworth which contains a portrait by Woolner with an appreciative inscription underneath. Out from the gloomy church we pass into the sunshine and, whether we have read his poetry or not, visit the sheltered corner under the yew-trees where a simple slate slab bears the plain inscription, and nothing more, “William Wordsworth, 1850,” “Mary Wordsworth, 1858,”—a tombstone in keeping with his simplicity of character and freedom from all that pertained to artificiality. The yew-trees were brought



Grasmere Church

On the banks of the River Rothay.

Dove Cottage.

across the lake from Loughrigg Tarn and planted here under Wordsworth's own directions. Hartley Coleridge, the genial-hearted and brilliant son of the author of "The Ancient Mariner," is buried a few yards away under the more elaborate headstone with a circular top.

The picturesque hamlet itself contains little of interest beyond perhaps the fact that the palatial but comfortable Rothay Hotel was originally built by the late Lord Cadogan, and was his home for many years. After the church, no doubt Dove Cottage claims attention. It was here that Wordsworth lived from 1799 to 1808, and to it he brought his bride, Mary Hutchinson, in 1802. De Quincey also occupied it for many years after Wordsworth left it; indeed it may safely be said that no other cottage has been visited by so many brilliant literary and artistic people of bygone times. The names of Sir Walter Scott, the Coleridges, Southey, Charles Lamb, Humphrey Davy, Charles Lloyd, Ruskin, Christopher North, Matthew Arnold and many others rise unbidden to the mind as one stands at the back door and gazes upwards to the summer house above the little rock-garden which Wordsworth designed, aided by his gentle sister Dorothy. This little natural rock-garden has been immortalized in the following farewell lines, written when the poet was leaving it for an absence of two months—his honeymoon:—

"Farewell, thou little nook of mountain ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare.
Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell! we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
Thee and the cottage which thou dost surround."

Dove Cottage has now been purchased by a number of Wordsworth's admirers and is preserved as a permanent memorial. The quaint rooms contain many priceless relics of the Lakes Poets; much of the furniture

Rydal Water.

is as Wordsworth and his sister used it and, to a person with even the most superficial knowledge of their writings, a visit must prove of absorbing interest.

Dove Cottage is situated just off the main road, a few yards from the Prince of Wales Hotel, the name of which reminds one that Royalty has visited Grasmere. As quite a boy, our late King Edward VII. stayed at this magnificent and beautifully-situated hotel, and during his stay was rowed across to the Island. He wandered away from his attendants and happened upon some sheep grazing. Boylike, he collared one of them and treated himself to a ride, whereupon the old woman tending the sheep appeared round a corner, quickly collared His Royal Highness and gave him what she considered he richly deserved. Just then the attendants hove in sight and rescued the prince, explaining to the old woman the enormity of such an offence as thrashing the future King of England. With true rustic independence, she attached little importance to the exalted rank of her annoyer, and exclaimed, "King or nea King, he's a badly browt up brat an' if ah hed his mudder here ah'd tell her t' seam!" Such is the incident as I had it the other day from one who knew well the old woman herself.

If we keep along past Dove Cottage and climb the hill between it and Rydal Water, we soon come to a gate in the wall on our right. This is Wordsworth's "Wishing Gate" and from it Grasmere and Silverhow look their best. We must not linger here, however, but keep along the road until Rydal Water lies at our feet, with Nab Scar sweeping down to it on the left. This is the smallest of the lakes and at the same time one of the prettiest. "We admire great things, but love small ones": this is one of the latter. Whether seen through the trees from the main road near Wordsworth's Rock, or from its margin, the reedy foreshore and pretty islands, with gentle background of hills, give Rydal a place apart in Lakeland's scheme of beauty. On the road



Rydal Water

And Nab Scar, with Nab Cottage, Coleridge's home, across the lake.

The Poet's Seat.

side near the Grasmere end of the lake is Nab Cottage, for many years the home of Hartley Coleridge—"Lile Hartley" of genial memory, loved by the dales-folk, a rare hand at a tale, and a "poet every inch o' im," as one of his local contemporaries voiced it to me the other day.

A couple of hundred yards further along on the road is a natural pedestal of rock with rough hewn steps leading to its top. This is supposed to have been used by Wordsworth as a view point and seat where he wrote many of his poems. What with the dust of motors and the hooting of their horns, and the rattling of char-a-bancs, one cannot help feeling that the poetry to-day would resolve itself into "a curse and a hasty descent." However this may be, the hundred yards of main road on either side of the rock must surely be the most beautiful in all England to-day, and motorists and coaching-folk have as much right upon it, and perhaps enjoy it as much, as some of those who are so "down" on the wheeled traffic in Lakeland. The little village of Rydal, with its church, beech trees and old houses, leads us thence to Pelter Bridge and the walk through the beautiful park of Rothay.

CHAPTER IV.

Thirlmere, Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite.

THE main road running North from Grasmere to Thirlmere, over Dunmail Raise, rises to a height of eight hundred and fifty feet. On a hot summer's day it is a long sultry grind, whether one be walking or driving in a char-a-banc, for the two things are much the same here. About half-a-mile out of Grasmere the coachman pulls up his horses and intimates that if any of the gentlemen would like to walk, the horses would not object. This procedure led a humorous American gentleman, who had paid the usual fare from Windermere to Keswick, to exclaim when he reached the top "Wa'al, I guess I never walked so far for 7/6 in all my life before"!

But this walk up Dunmail Raise is a blessing in disguise, for the pedestrian has thus more opportunity of studying the country-side and particularly of drinking in the lovely retrospect to "Grasmere's peaceful vale." He will have time also to stop near the foot of the last steep bit and see the Lion and the Lamb on top of Helm Crag, mentioned in Wordsworth's verse. The curious rocks up there bear a striking resemblance to these animals, but if your driver should ask if you saw the Lion and two Lambs, be very wary, for when you say "No" he will chuckle, crack his whip and exclaim "No? and no wonder for t' other lamb's inside of t' lion"! At the top of the Raise, marked by the huge pile of stones over King Dunmail's grave, we pass from Westmoreland into Cumberland and get our first glimpse of Thirlmere. A long easy gradient takes us merrily downward until we see the full length of the lake and realize once more what a wonderful country we



Thirlmere and Helvellyn

From the "new road" on the western side of the Lake.

Thirlmere.

are in. The change in the character of the prospect is most striking; the sylvan scenery of Grasmere and Rydal is replaced by a loneliness and sombre beauty that might belong to another part of the world. And still we are less than four miles from Grasmere! The bare flank of Helvellyn on our right and the stony slopes of Steel Fell opposite have a charm of their own, as also have the interspersed rock and wood of Fisher and Raven Crag ahead, with the cone of Skiddaw peeping over them to the North.

Ere long we pass the end of a road leading off to the left. This trends along the western side of Thirlmere and was built by the Manchester people after they decided to use the lake as their reservoir. It was feared that the necessary damming and flooding of the mere, together with other engineering work, would mar its beauty, and for a short time ugly scars were certainly left. But the hand of time has now almost hidden these, and the "new road" on the western side of the lake is an ample recompense for any temporary spoliation. Moreover, it has opened up some beautiful scenery. Now-a-days, the tourist can gaze across at Helvellyn and obtain an adequate idea of its beautiful curves and outline—an impossibility from the "old road," for it runs along the mountain's breast too closely.

At the south end of Thirlmere we come upon the little township of Wythburn—a few houses and farmsteads, tended by one of the many "smallest churches in England." It is locally known as "the Cathedral." Our coach stops by the church-yard wall and we, at least some of us, stroll inside the sacred edifice. Others stroll inside an edifice of a different kind which is on the opposite side of the road! We are of the church party, however, and are well repaid by following the "narrow path." Not because of the appointments of the church itself, although they are seemly enough, but because of the topical verses by various poets which are framed at the entrance. They savour somewhat of a

Wythburn Church.

poet's competition, from which perhaps Hartley Coleridge emerges at the top with the following terse, but beautifully human, description of the church itself:—

“Humble it is and meek and very low,
And speaks its purpose with a single bell;
But God Himself, and He alone, doth know
If spiry temples please him half so well.”

The main road continues towards Keswick level and straight for some distance. The view across the lake is almost unchanged until we top Park Brow and gaze down the beautiful Vale of St. John, with the carven front of Blencathra hemming it in at the far end. The jutting crag on its right is the famous Castle Rock, the scene of Sir Walter Scott's “Bridal of Triermain.” He describes a knight approaching it at twilight and “reining in his steed,” alarmed because he saw “airy turrets and a mighty keep and tower” in front. The resemblance to a castle is difficult to trace; perhaps Sir Walter's knight had called at the Inn at Threlkeld before he set out!

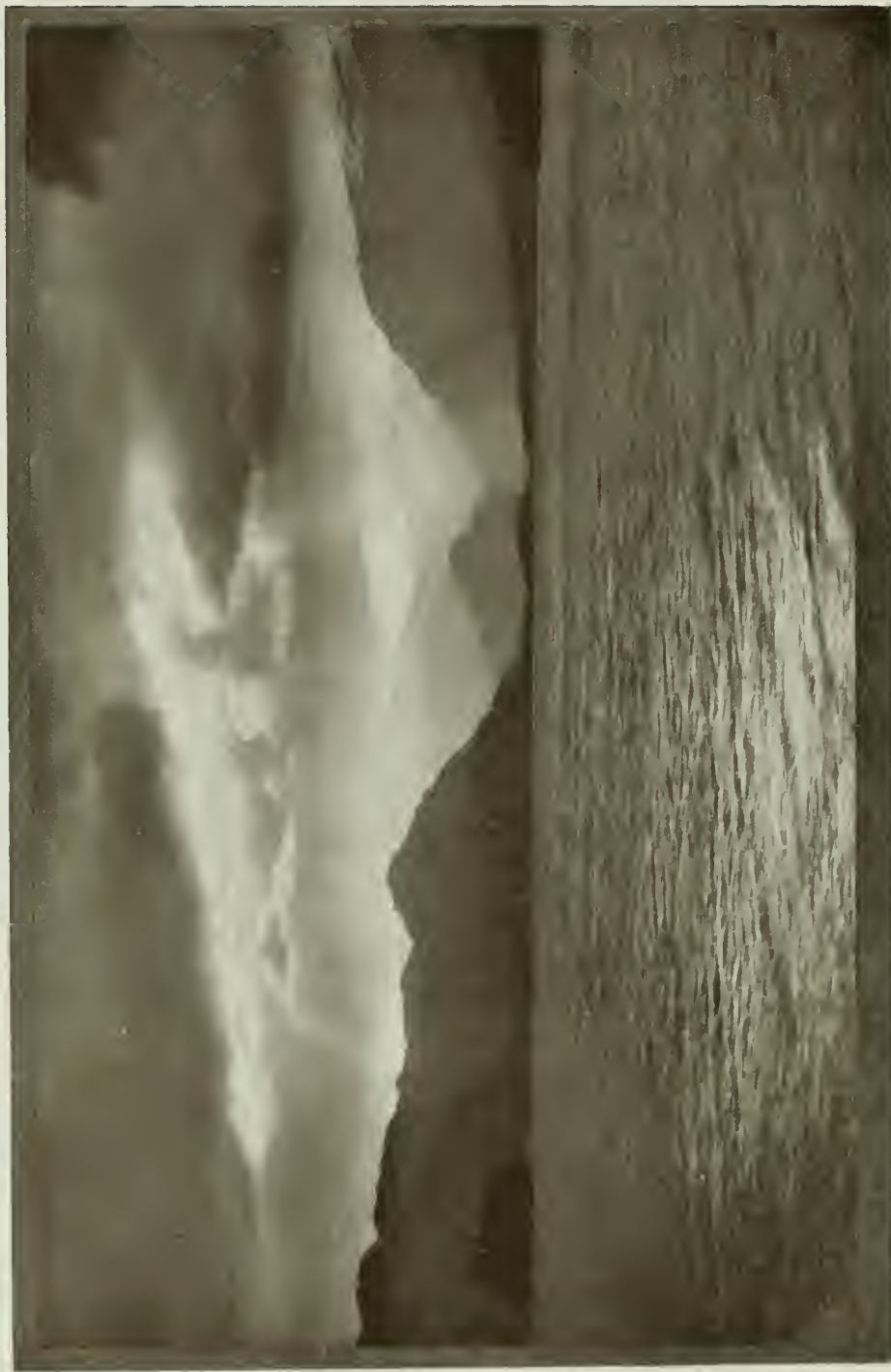
We do not go down St. John's Vale, but leave it on our right and traverse the parallel Vale of Naddle. This debouches upon the Greta Valley lower down, but our road climbs the steep hill to the moor, and soon overlooks the fertile plain of Keswick. Bassenthwaite Lake is in the far distance, with the majestic mass of Skiddaw guarding it on the north. Whatever disappointments the Derwentwater scenery may have in store for us (and I do not think it will have any) the first glimpse we obtain of it to the west, with the lovely outlines of Causey and Grisedale Pikes beyond, will be voted but little short of perfection. This approach to Keswick is one of the “tit-bits” of Lakeland and I know many people who have gone home cherishing this as the most memorable view they have seen.

The market town of Keswick, situated on the south bank of the



Keswick and Derwentwater

Viewed from Latrigg, looking south to Borrowdale and Scawfell.



Derwentwater from Friars' Crag

"A rift in the Clouds."

Keswick.

river Greta, has often been called the metropolis of the Lake District. It is certainly the largest town in Lakeland, but as there are much larger elsewhere and because visitors do not come here for the sake of the towns, we can dismiss it in a few words. It should be said that as a centre for the tourist it has no rival in the North of Lakeland. It possesses ideal accommodation for visitors, from the magnificent and first-class Keswick Hotel, beautifully situated on the banks of the Greta, to the homely temperance hotel and comfortable private apartments. Char-a-bancs leave Keswick daily by the dozen during the summer for all parts, and, although it is then a busy place, the rowdy tripper element is lacking. Its staple industry is that of lead-pencil making, but the days are gone when the famous Borrowdale plumbago was found and worked locally, and the pencil industry now employs but few hands. Keswick is better known as the *venue* of the parent convention. From it have sprung all the other religious conventions at home and abroad and during the end of July people congregate here from all parts of the world. The little town is filled to its utmost capacity and at this time it is a place to be avoided by all but conventioners.

Whilst by no means ugly in itself, Keswick is not remarkable for beauty. What it lacks in this way, however, is more than atoned for by its surroundings. A mile to the north of it is the impressive Skiddaw and Blencathra group, a perfect blaze of colour when the heather blooms or when the dying bracken catches the sunlight and splashes their breasts with molten gold. "A great camp of single mountains, each in shape resembling a giant's tent" bounds it on the west and south, with Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite nestling snugly at their base. Out to the eastward is the fertile valley of the Greta with the spur of Helvellyn overlooking it—truly a galaxy of interest and beauty of which Keswickians may be passing proud.

But Derwentwater itself, and its wonderful setting, will rightly

Derwentwater.

claim our first attention. An imposing sheet of water roughly oval in shape and about three miles long by a mile across, with shores indented and cut up into dozens of secluded creeks; a surface dotted with richly wooded islands, possessing the charm of personal and historic associations; the whole surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains "rocky but not vast, broken into many fantastic shapes, peaked and splintered" and with narrow valleys opening up between them; reflecting faithfully stern precipice, velvet-like meadow, foliage-draped hillside, with here and there a white farmstead showing through, and mountain ghylls that "pour forth streams more sweet than Castaly"—such is Derwentwater.

Ruskin, in his "Modern Painters," has said in effect that this lake as seen from Friar's Crag affords one of the three finest prospects in the whole world. And as we stand on the fir-grown rocky promontory, but five minutes' walk from Keswick, on a still summer morning and gaze up between the islands to the "Jaws of Borrowdale" and the Scawfell mountains shimmering in the blue haze; or upon a sullen day in March when the fell-tops are obscured by clouds and the sun sends long streamers of light through the rifts to the disturbed surface of the water; or when a southerly gale sweeps down from Lodore, staggering the Scotch firs, dashing the breakers against the crag and recoiling in spindrift and foam—under whatever conditions this view is regarded it will be generally conceded that Ruskin was justified in his opinion. The island quite close at hand on the left is Lord's Island, once the home of the Earls of Derwentwater. The precipice above it is Walla Crag and it was up a steep rift in its face—the one marked by the white stone near its top—that Lady Derwentwater fled with the family jewels. Her lord was lying under sentence of death in London for espousing the cause of the Pretender, and this desperate, but, alas, unavailing climb was undertaken with the object of journeying to ransom his life.



Friar's Crag, Derwentwater

With Walla Crag and Lord's Island.



The Head of Derwentwater

From Castle Hill, a quarter of an hour's walk from Keswick. Borrowdale and Scawfell Pike are well seen in the middle background; the islands from left to right, are Rampsholme, Lord's Isle, and St. Herbert's Island.

Castle Head.

That was in 1715. A thousand years before, the large island far up the lake was the home of Saint Herbert, the *fidus Achates* of the venerable Saint Cuthbert who often visited him here. So great was their mutual love and esteem that they expressed a desire that both should die at the same time "so that their souls might wing their flight to Heaven in company." And although on Saint Herbert's Island,

"The hermit numbered his last day
Far from Saint Cuthbert, his beloved friend,
These holy men both died in the same hour."

The splash of white in the gorge to the left of the island is the Fall of Lodore, rendered famous by Southey, the Keswick poet laureate. But a detailed description of Friar's Crag and its surroundings is beyond the scope of this book, as well as of the writer's ability, so perhaps we had better pass on to fresh scenes.

The best general view of Derwentwater is to be obtained from the eminence Castle Head, and indeed, for the amount of effort entailed, this is perhaps the best view in all Lakeland. From the actual top, the whole of the lake with its beautiful islands is visible. It occupies the place of honour in the foreground and is surrounded by mountains of almost every shape and variety. The craggy group at the head of Borrowdale—Scawfell and its satellites—the long grassy sweep of Maiden Moor, Catbells, and, round to the right, the double hump of Causey Pike rising above Barrow and Swinside, with Grisedale Pike beyond; and thence away to pointed Skiddaw, Blencathra and the Dodds of Helvellyn, present a diversity of form and colour that it would be difficult to surpass. Gilpin (no relation, by the way, to John of that ilk) described the lake as "Beauty lying in the lap of Horror." That was in the eighteenth century. Just the other day an old Keswick woman expressed the opinion that "there's nowt to mak' sec' a fuss about, for efter aw its nobbut a mix up of t' fells, wood and watter." Our attitude towards the mountains has undoubtedly

Crosthwaite Church.

changed in the last two hundred years and familiarity has, in some cases, bred contempt. If the tourist has not yet attained to the latter stage, he ought not to leave the district until he has seen Derwentwater from Castle Head.

The Druid's Circle, on the hill about two miles above Keswick, is well worth a visit. However mistaken these ancients may have been in their ideas of worship, there can be no gainsaying the fact that they knew what they were about when they chose the site of their Temple. How much better and more inspiring this rude circle of stones high up on the mountain, surrounded by the everlasting hills and purified by all the winds of Heaven, than the often stuffy edifices of latter-day worshippers! However, to those whose tastes lie in the direction of more modern sanctuaries, Crosthwaite Church cannot but appeal. It is somewhat singular that its strongest charms should be those of antiquity and situation. Its square weather-beaten tower, sheltered by the mighty Skiddaw, is in wonderful harmony with its surroundings. As regards its antiquity, there is evidence that a church occupied the present site before the Conquest, but it has been restored more than once since then. It was given by Richard Coeur-de-Lion to the care of Fountains Abbey, in 1198—quite a respectable time ago. The recumbent marble memorial of the poet Southey, mementoes of the Derwentwater family, and the old fourteenth-century font are amongst the chief objects of interest inside the church, while in the church-yard is a horizontal slate tomb marking the poet's last resting-place.

Bassenthwaite Lake lies to the north-west of Derwentwater and is only separated from it by low-lying alluvial ground which, after heavy rain, is sometimes flooded to such an extent that the two lakes are joined. The drive around Bassenthwaite occupies half a day and is well worth taking, if only to obtain a proper idea of Skiddaw. Seen from the west side of the lake the mountain is most shapely and amazingly



Derwentwater, looking North

On the right is Skiddaw (3954 feet), with Keswick at its foot, whilst in the distance is seen Bassenthwaite Lake.

Bassenthwaite Lake.

rich in colour, but perhaps is more imposing when “shrouding his double front among Atlantic clouds”—a not unusual occurrence. The ride along the margin of the lake through Wythop Woods, over Ouse Bridge and back across the breast of Skiddaw, is one of singular beauty. The prospect from Applethwaite Terrace on the return journey was one of which Southey ever spoke with delight; it was his favourite view and indeed when seen at sunset, with Grisedale Pike outlined against a golden sky, and the intervening level spaces suffused with a rich after-glow, it is one that will survive in the memory after others are forgotten.

CHAPTER V.

The Borrowdale Valley, Buttermere and Crummock Lakes.

THE Buttermere Round (as the famous drive through Borrowdale, over Honister Pass to Buttermere, and back by the Vale of Newlands, is called) will always be an out-standing feature of a Lakeland holiday. The rapid changes in the character of the scenery are so dramatic, the various types of beauty seen are all so distinctive and so perfect in their own way, and the drive itself is so full of incident, not to say excitement, that this could not well be otherwise.

Our char-a-banc leaves Keswick at ten o'clock, upon any morning throughout the summer, and follows the road past Castle Head and along the eastern margin of Derwentwater. Ravishing glimpses of the lake and opposing mountains are caught through the foliage of Great Wood, as we drive along under an avenue of oak and fir trees. High up on our left is the forbidding escarpment of Walla Crag, reminiscent of Lady Derwentwater's wild escapade; this rises sheer over us until we emerge from the forest and see the face of Falcon Crag towering perpendicularly in front. It is one of the many features of our drive that we get a glimpse for a few seconds and then we lose it, to be introduced almost immediately to a scene of an entirely different character. The lake again arrests our attention and displays all its beauties for a full mile until the roar of Lodore Falls is heard in the narrow gorge in front.

Perhaps the glowing description by Southey and the glimpses of

The Jaws of Borrowdale.

white we catch through the trees will leave us with a better impression of the falls than if we alighted and came to close quarters. Truth to tell, they will be found disappointing in normally dry weather. The American gentleman who searched for an hour up and down the gorge, and at last sat down in despair, merits our sympathy. For it was unkind of a local worthy to reply, in answer to a query as to the whereabouts of the waterfall, "Why, man, ye're sittin' on it"!

A mile further along we enter the "Jaws of Borrowdale," not such a fearsome proceeding as it sounds. The "Jaws" are formed by the mountains, Maiden Moor and Brund Fell—the retaining walls of the rapidly narrowing valley. Rising from its side is the "Tooth of Borrowdale," Castle Crag, a rocky pyramid commanding the approaches of the valley in all directions. For this reason it was occupied by the Romans as a military station. It forms a fitting background to the little village of Grange, with its picturesque, double-span bridge (over the river Derwent) which we soon pass on our right. At the far side of the bridge is unmistakable evidence of the long past Glacial Period. A large rounded slab of rock is here exposed and on its surface are to be plainly seen the scratches and long indentations made by the glacier as it slowly ground its huge mass westward towards the sea. It must have been about this period—or, at all events, very long ago, for the incident lacks confirmation—that the folk of Borrowdale built their famous wall. It is on record that the natives thought that if they could keep the cuckoo always with them, they would have eternal summer. So, early one spring they began to build a wall across the valley, just beyond Grange, but in the autumn the unappreciative migrant flew over the top of it and the good people of Borrowdale gave up their project in disgust.

After climbing a gentle gradient and rounding the corner past a slate quarry, we come upon the most lovely bit of valley scenery in

Honister Pass.

England. Such at least is my humble opinion. The defile is here so narrow that there is only space for the road and the river running alongside it. Silver birches overhang our heads. Larch, oak and fir clothe the hills low down, while, above the belt of foliage, heather and bracken, the stony fellside is dominated by gaunt, grey crags, around which the ravens circle. At our feet flows the Derwent; its bed is of green slate peculiar to the neighbourhood. This has the effect of imparting to the water a brilliant emerald tinge, the splash of vivid colouring that is the key-note of the whole beautiful combination. The huge isolated rock, up on the small plateau ahead, is the famous Bowder Stone, claimed to be the largest detached boulder in England. More remarkable than its size, however, is the small space upon which it rests. So narrow is this that directly under the greatest bulk of the stone two persons, one on each side, may shake hands, and we are told that whatever they wish for at the time they are sure to get. Perhaps, this is why one so often observes a man at one side and a lady of similar age at the other!

Lack of space renders it impossible to dwell in detail upon this wonderful valley. The green, hill-girt pastures of Rosthwaite; picturesque Langstrath, guarded by the square shoulder of Eagle Crag, leading over Stake Pass into Langdale; the wild valley of Seathwaite, famous for its old plumbago mines and enclosed by the grandest and highest fells in Lakeland, and the moss-covered, old-world farmsteads and overhanging eaves of Seatoller, must be dismissed with bare mention. The steep grind up Honister Hause above Seatoller has compensation for us in the lovely woodland glen below it, with Horse Ghyll singing lustily out of the depths. Another twenty minutes finds us, after having traversed a stretch of moorland worthy of the Scottish Highlands, on the top of Honister Pass, gazing at one of the grandest cliffs in Lakeland. Honister Crag presents its almost perpendicular sweeping outline in



The Bowder Stone
And the Valley of Borrowdale.



Buttermere and Crummock Water

From the top of Honister Crag, showing Loweswater in the distance.

Buttermere.

front of us; but one's admiration is divided between this and the startling scheme of the fell-side colouring—great tracts of dark grey interspersed with streamers of brilliant emerald and white. This is the same beautiful colouring as we noticed in the Derwent below Bowder Stone, but whereas the latter is caused by the gently flowing stream, Honister Crag owes its vivid tints to the refuse thrown from the slate quarries near its summit ridge. Which makes enthusiasm somewhat difficult!

The iron skid is attached and our char-a-banc ploughs its way down the pass a few hundred yards, until suddenly the road in front of us seems to go almost perpendicularly over. Soon we are on the brink. The view downward, with the stream away below us in front and an unguarded precipice on our left, strikes terror into the hearts of nervous lady passengers; many of them prefer to alight and walk down this bit. Many of the gentlemen too, with lordly unconcern, express a desire to "stretch their legs" and they also get out and walk! The danger is only fancied, however, for thousands of char-a-bancs and other conveyances come over here every season and no accident, nor anything approaching an accident, has occurred—surely a tribute alike to the care and skill of the drivers, the excellence of their horses and the vigilance of the hotel proprietors, who see that all wheels, harness and other trappings are of the very best, and in perfect order. Thence the pass runs along the valley bottom, with Honister towering above on the one hand and the almost equally bare declivities of Yew Crag on the other—the wildest bit of coach road in the district—until, after passing through a gateway we come quite suddenly upon the gem of the "round," Buttermere Lake itself. A small sheet of water as regards size, it is nevertheless very imposing. Set deep amongst mountains descending almost sheer into the lake and traversed by gloomy ghylls and water slides, bare of foliage except for a few localized larch and oak trees,

Crummock Water.

which seem to emphasise its quality of sombreness, Buttermere cannot fail to secure a lasting place amongst our memories of Lakeland. From the grand square shoulder of Honister Crag, now seen "end on," with Great Gable peeping over its flank, followed by High Crag, the massive wedge of High Stile and the cone of Red Pike, to the distant form of Melbreak beyond Crummock Water, the mountain grouping leaves nothing to be desired—not even height or vastness; indeed, these qualities are quite features of Buttermere. Yet the lake is only a little over a mile long and the mountains less than three thousand feet above sea-level! Truly, form, proportion and atmosphere are wonderful deceivers.

The little village of Buttermere, with its hotels, church and farmsteads, lies ten minutes drive along, between the lake and Crummock Water. Here we "outspan," lunch and then walk down through the pastures to our boat waiting to take us across the lake to Scale Force. Although this row over the lake does not form the best introduction to Crummock Water, it brings us into contact with its most typical and charming view-point. Our boat grounds a few yards away from Ling Crag, at the base of which is a veritable "silver strand" of white shingle. This forms a beautiful foreground to the still lake and massive mountain forms beyond. The black shadow of Rannerdale Knott, silhouetted against the more distant breast of the double-topped Whiteless Pike, inspires us, not with awesomeness or gloom, but with the less repulsive, indeed, often welcome, sense of solitude. The great bulk of mountain facing us as we land is Melbreak and we skirt the end of this for nearly a mile until the roar of Scale Force can be heard in a ravine to our left. This is the highest of the Lakeland waterfalls. Perhaps also it is the best worth seeing. The water comes down sheer in a single leap from a height of over a hundred feet, and is nicely set in a rocky frame, draped with mosses, ferns and undergrowth. It is worth



Crummock Water, and Whiteless Pike
"Solitude."

Buttermere Hause.

while to climb to the bank near the head of the cascade. As we lie stretched on the grassy hummocks, we overlook a magnificent view of the lake and mountains, with Honister Crag and Buttermere away at the head of the valley. This is an ideal spot, but the exigencies of the drive back to Keswick prevent over-indulgence and before long we must rejoin our char-a-banc at Buttermere.

The story of Mary of Buttermere and the specious scoundrel who married, and then deserted her, will be recalled—a sordid tale of imposture and only worthy of mention because of its unusual setting. One does not associate this kind of thing with the mountains. More interesting and amusing was this man's career in Keswick, where, as the Honourable Augustus Hope, he hobnobbed with the "gentry" and fooled and fleeced them to a fine tune. More in keeping with Buttermere is the incident of the parson who refused to consummate the marriage service of a brother clerical, his reason being that a herdwick sheep stood in the doorway when the banns were called, and cried "Baa" very loudly. This, to the parson, sounded like an objection and "just cause" why the marriage should be stopped!

There are other tales told of Buttermere, but our coach is now ready and before long we swing off the main road by the little church and breast the steep pull up the fellside to Buttermere Hause. The more energetic members of the party are mutely requested to walk by the sight of the straining backs of the horses. If this is ineffectual, as I have sometimes known it to be, the driver explains the seductive delights afforded by a contemplation of the bracken and heather slopes of Sail and Eel Crag when seen "*pied à terre*". Whatever the inducement, the upshot is a steep walk of about a mile until the hause, or top of the pass, is attained. A fine waterfall in the breast of Robinson—Robinson being the unromantic name of the mountain across the valley—diverts our attention from

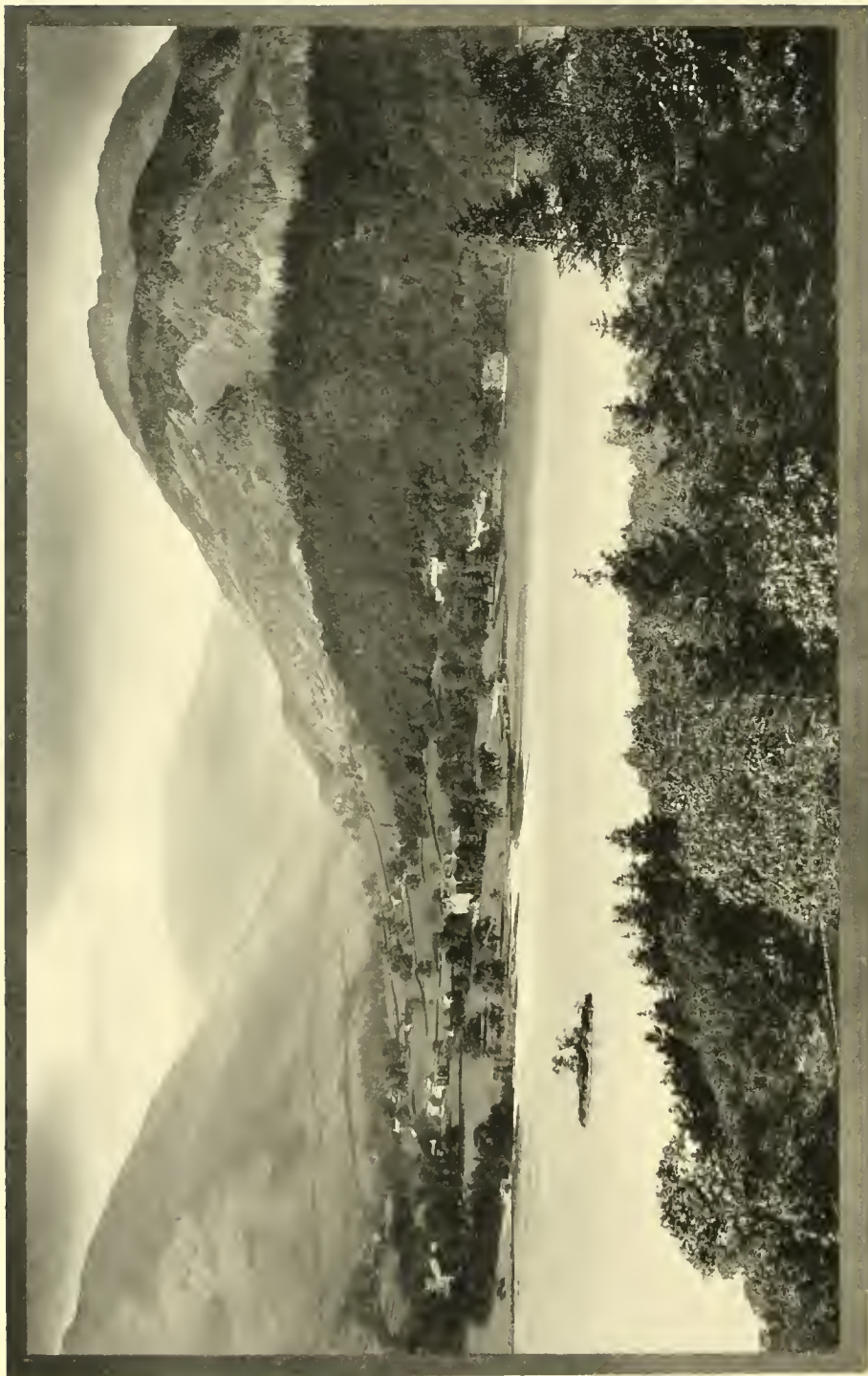
The Vale of Newlands.

the moor intervening between us and the Vale of Newlands, with distant Blencathra beyond. A "nervy" hill, surfaced with shale in which the wheel-skids grip finely, leads us down into the valley bottom and thence follows a long stretch of moorland—a fitting preparation for the pretty wooded scenery more in evidence as we near our journey's end. We bowl merrily along, happy in meditating on the beauties through which we have passed, when suddenly we become aware that the roadway has vanished. There is no time to protest before we find ourselves overlooking a steep brow and bating our breath as the coach tilts at an alarming angle. This is the famous "Devil's Elbow," an awe-inspiring hill, the descent of which is rather like a tooth extraction—pleasant enough in retrospect. The proceeding is a perfectly safe one, however, and before long we find ourselves in the heart of Newlands Vale, whence three miles of excellent going takes us through the village of Portinscale, past Crosthwaite Church to Keswick and our quarters.



"The Devil's Elbow"

Showing the coaches returning from Buttermere to Keswick, on the "Buttermere round."



The Head of Ullswater

As seen from Place Fell, and looking across to Stybarrow Crag and Helvellyn, with the village and vale of Glenridding.

CHAPTER VI.

Ullswater and Helvellyn.

ULLSWATER is at once the finest and the tamest of all the lakes. This seeming paradox is explained when one realizes that it is formed of three distinct reaches, all of which are hidden from the others. The lowest reach stretches out in a thin wedge of water to the confines of the mountains at Pooley Bridge; the higher fells are away at the other end. In its length of nine miles the lake stretches further and further into the recesses of the hills, until, at its head or upper reach, it nestles amongst the most beautiful and impressive combination of mountains and woods in Lakeland. The middle reach also, has a beauty of its own, a mixture of the sublime and the ordinary. Its chief charm lies in its loneliness, evidence of human habitation being almost entirely lacking.

As we sail up from the foot of the lake there is ever present the feeling that we are working up to a climax, and this is attained when the top reach bursts on our view in a way that is quite dramatic and which exceeds our most sanguine expectations. The richly wooded slopes on our right descend to the water's edge, whilst above they merge into the craggy fellsides, in many places overgrown by purple heather and golden bracken, with sombre Scotch firs interspersed in lavish style. Beyond this front array stretches the long, lean flank of Helvellyn, glimpses of which are caught away at the heads of all the side valleys. In front of us the fine sweep of St. Sunday's Crag, one of the most perfect

Ullswater.

outlines in the district, forms a centre-piece. Its beautiful curve sweeps gracefully down towards the Grisedale Valley, like a high-born lady acknowledging the existence of a humbler presence. Further round still is the deep valley of Kirkstone, bounded on the left again by the High Street range and its dependencies. Place Fell—variegated with masses of dark gorse and crag, but almost devoid of trees—fills in the scene on the left, an excellent foil to the luxuriance which is the dominant note of the opposite shore.

Ullswater is more reminiscent of the lakes of Switzerland or Scotland than any of the others, and no doubt those visitors who award the palm of beauty to it have previously formed their ideals in these two districts. Perhaps these are the people whose opinion is the soundest and most discriminating; however this may be, Ullswater certainly disputes the sovereignty of beauty with Windermere and Derwentwater.

After the sail up the lake on one of the comfortable steam yachts which run continuously throughout the season, the best idea of Ullswater is to be obtained by walking from Howtown Bay to Patterdale, along the western margin of the water. A rough, unobtrusive path leads us past the flank of Hallin Fell, whence the full sweep of the lowest reach is in full view with the rounded form of Dunmallet, an old Roman fort, away in the distance. After ten minutes stroll through knee-deep bracken, with its fragrant scent in our nostrils and the song of birds in our ears, we reach the tree-covered rocky point known as Kailpot Crag. This gets its name from a curious water-wrought rock basin, near the water's edge, known as the "Devil's Kailpot," which is about a foot deep and eighteen inches across. There is a common local tradition that it brings luck to those who drop money into it. And this proceeding does undoubtedly bring luck—to the knowing ones who collect the coppers after the credulous tourist has taken his departure!



Ullswater

From Silver Point, showing the head of the lake and St. Sunday's Crag, with Helvellyn to the right.

Gowbarrow Park.

Across the lake from here are the Mell Fells, and a short distance further up, also on the opposite side, Gowbarrow Park, recently purchased by the National Trust. This is now open to the public for ever and a debt of gratitude is undoubtedly due to those sixteen hundred public spirited persons who subscribed the necessary funds. Long after our district has been bought up by private owners and their notice-boards stare one in the face at every turn, this, the most beautiful, wooded glen in Cumberland, will be open for ever to the nature lover without let or hindrance—a great national infirmary where hard workers can come and drink in Nature's own medicine. Not only is this Gowbarrow Park beautiful in itself, with its wealth of parkland, its glorious foliage, under which the red and fallow deer feed, and its torrent-filled glen, but the views of Ullswater as seen from here impart to it a character possessed by no other park in the length and breadth of the land.

The gorge down which dashes the waterfall, Aira Force, is the most beautiful spot in the park and the fall itself, a single leap of about sixty feet in height, is one of the finest in Lakeland. Gowbarrow Park and the fell above it were opened by the Speaker in 1906, when he felicitously recalled the mountain in labour which brought forth a mouse—"but," to quote his words on this occasion, "it is the mice that have been in labour and brought forth a mountain." More "mice" are needed. Lakeland estates are constantly coming into the market and it would be a fine thing if funds were always in readiness to secure them for the nation. Canon Rawnsley, of Keswick, is the honorary secretary of the National Trust, and will always be glad to receive donations to this end.

It was on the margin of the water below Gowbarrow that Wordsworth saw the daffodils which inspired his poem, ridiculed by the critics of his time but now recognised as a glory of our national literature.

Helvellyn.

The last verse is so typical of Wordsworth's conception of nature that I take the liberty of quoting it:

"For oft when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye,
Which is the bliss of solitude:
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils."

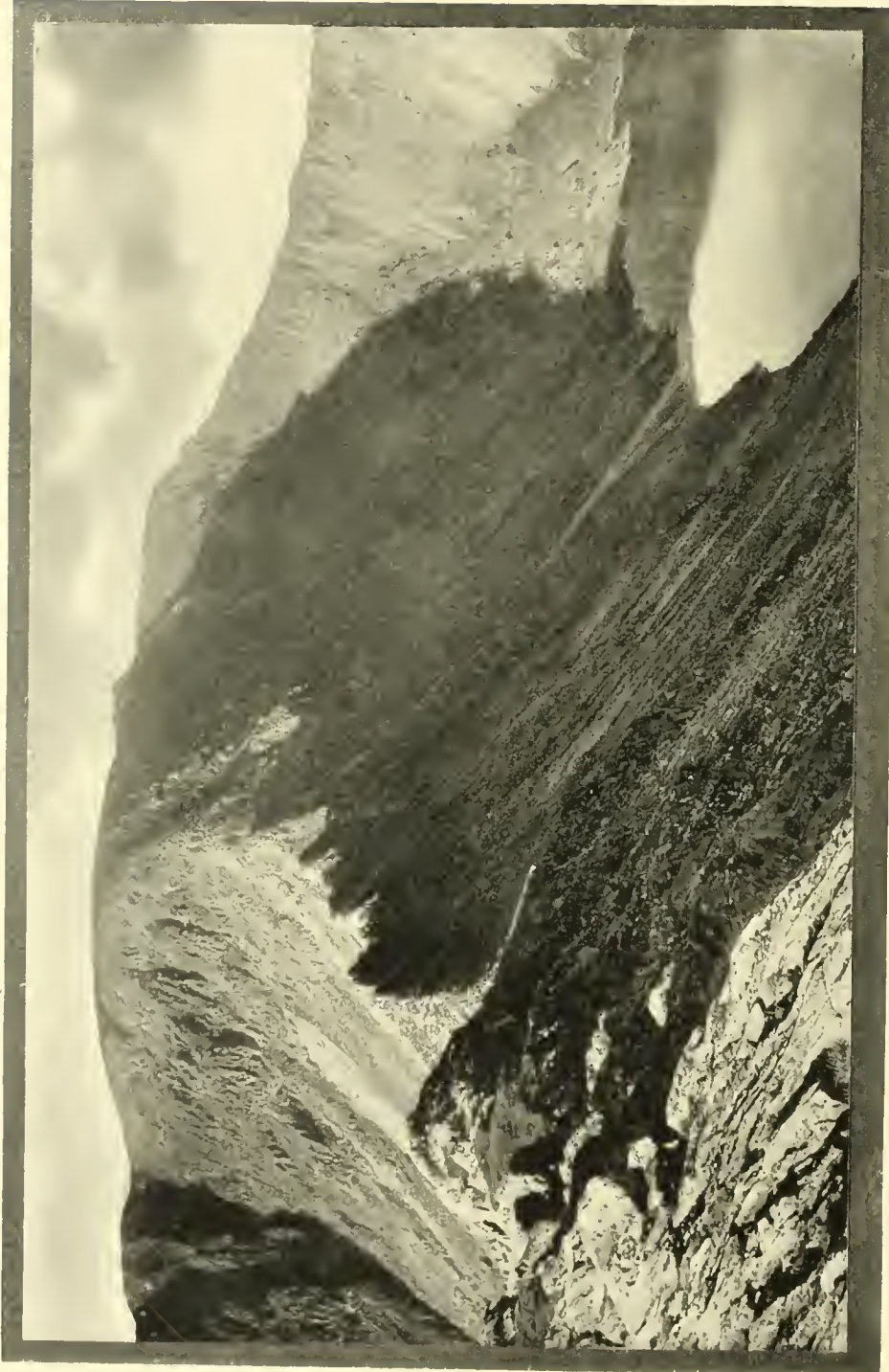
After rounding Kailpot Crag the path winds along the side of Hallin Fell and Birk Fell for a couple of miles until it crosses Silver Point, and we come into full view of the upper reach of the lake. Ullswater looks magnificent from here. Right across from us, seen over the little island of House Holm, is richly wooded Glencoin, above which the bleak Dodds of Helvellyn stand out in distinctive contrast. Further up the lake the arrangement of the mountains and valleys is that already described from the steamer: reference to the two accompanying photographs, which are taken hereabouts, will afford a better idea of the scene than any amount of verbal description. It is well to continue our walk as far as the little village of Patterdale, for every step is a delight, and variety of scenic effect nullifies the distance marvellously. A glance into the quaint little church is well worth while, and then we follow the main road along through Glenridding village to Stybarrow Crag, a jutting promontory beneath which the road has barely room to wind because of the nearness of the lake. It was at this narrow pass that the dalesmen once made a successful stand against a band of Scottish Mosstroopers. Nowadays, it witnesses nothing more stirring than parties of picnickers and it must be admitted that it is an ideal place for the purpose.

Helvellyn, the second highest mountain in England, affords a grand scramble from Glenridding or Patterdale. Although its ascent involves no hand to hand climbing, all true mountaineers must enjoy the



Stybarrow Crag

And Ullswater, with Gowbarrow Fell in the background.



Striding Edge, Helvellyn

On the right is Red Tarn, and above it Swirrel Edge, the highest point seen being the top of Helvellyn.

Kirkstone Pass.

fine walk along the twin edges, Striding Edge and Swirrel Edge, between which lies the wild mountain lakelet, Red Tarn. Much has been written about the terrors of Striding Edge and I have met nervous people who have been vastly pleased with themselves for having crossed it in safety. In reality it is merely a rough traverse of a rocky ridge along which, be it spoken low, a path runs! The central position of Helvellyn and its great height render the view from its top one of the finest in Lakeland. The prospect Eastward over the twin edges, with Ullswater beyond, and away on the far horizon the Pennines, dominated by Cross Fell, vies in interest and beauty with that in the opposite direction where all the chief lake-land heights, from Conistoun Old Man to Scawfell and Skiddaw, show to great advantage.

Ullswater has its chief communication with the southern Lakeland over Kirkstone Pass, a high mountain coach road crowned at the top by the inevitable "highest house in England." I wonder how many there are altogether. About a couple of miles beyond the head of Ullswater the road skirts the minor lake, Brother's Water, and almost immediately afterwards climbs the steep gradient between Red Screes and Caudale Moor. A large block of stone,

"Whose churchlike frame
Gives to the savage pass its name,"

stands on the slope of Red Screes near the top of the pass. This is the Kirk Stone. The road forks beyond the "Travellers Rest"—the highest house. The descent to Ambleside by the right-hand road is short, but appallingly steep. When taken in the opposite direction six horses are necessary to haul up a large char-a-banc and even then it well deserves its local name, "the struggle."

The other road diverges to the left and runs down through the beautiful Troutbeck Valley, a distance of seven miles, to Windermere.

Troutbeck.

It was in the little village of Troutbeck that the uncle of William Hogarth, the most truly English of all our great painters, lived. The genius of the uncle, "Auld Hoggart," as he was locally called by his fellow yeomen, evidenced itself in a wonderful facility for composing rhymes, short dramas in verse and cynical epitaphs. Particularly satirical is the following, and typical of much that he wrote

"Here lies a woman, no man can deny it,
She died in peace, although she lived unquiet.
Her husband prays if e'er this way you walk,
You would tread softly—if she wakes, she'll talk."



The Kirkstone Pass

And Brothers' Water, with Place Fell behind.

CHAPTER VII.

Coniston, Wastwater and Furness Abbey.

“THIS,” said John Ruskin, speaking of the Vale of Yewdale, “is the most beautiful valley in England.” And it is by Yewdale that Coniston is usually approached. Wherefore let all pay a visit to Coniston, if only for the sake of passing down that charming vale.

The drive from Ambleside along the banks of the Brathay, across Skelwith Bridge and thence over Oxenfell to Yewdale and down to Coniston, is typical of many of the day excursions in Lakeland—the changing scenes of beauty *en route* are so entrancing in themselves that even without a chief object in view, the drive is well worth taking. For whether it is the rich lichen-covered boulders over which the Brathay gently murmurs, the pastoral enclosures on its banks, with the old boundary walls climbing up the steep fellsides beyond, the feast of colour presented by the river and dark fir trees as we cross Skelwith Bridge, the wild moorland scenery of Oxenfell with that delicious glimpse across Colwith of the Langdale Pikes and Helvellyn, or the larch trees, heather and bracken slopes of Yewdale, interspersed with grey craggy patches, or whether, finally, it is Coniston Lake itself that most impresses us would be impossible to decide with any certainty.

But Coniston Lake alone is one of the sights of Lakeland and holds a high place in the esteem of many lovers of the beautiful in nature, beside Ruskin, who loved it so well that he made his home by its margin.

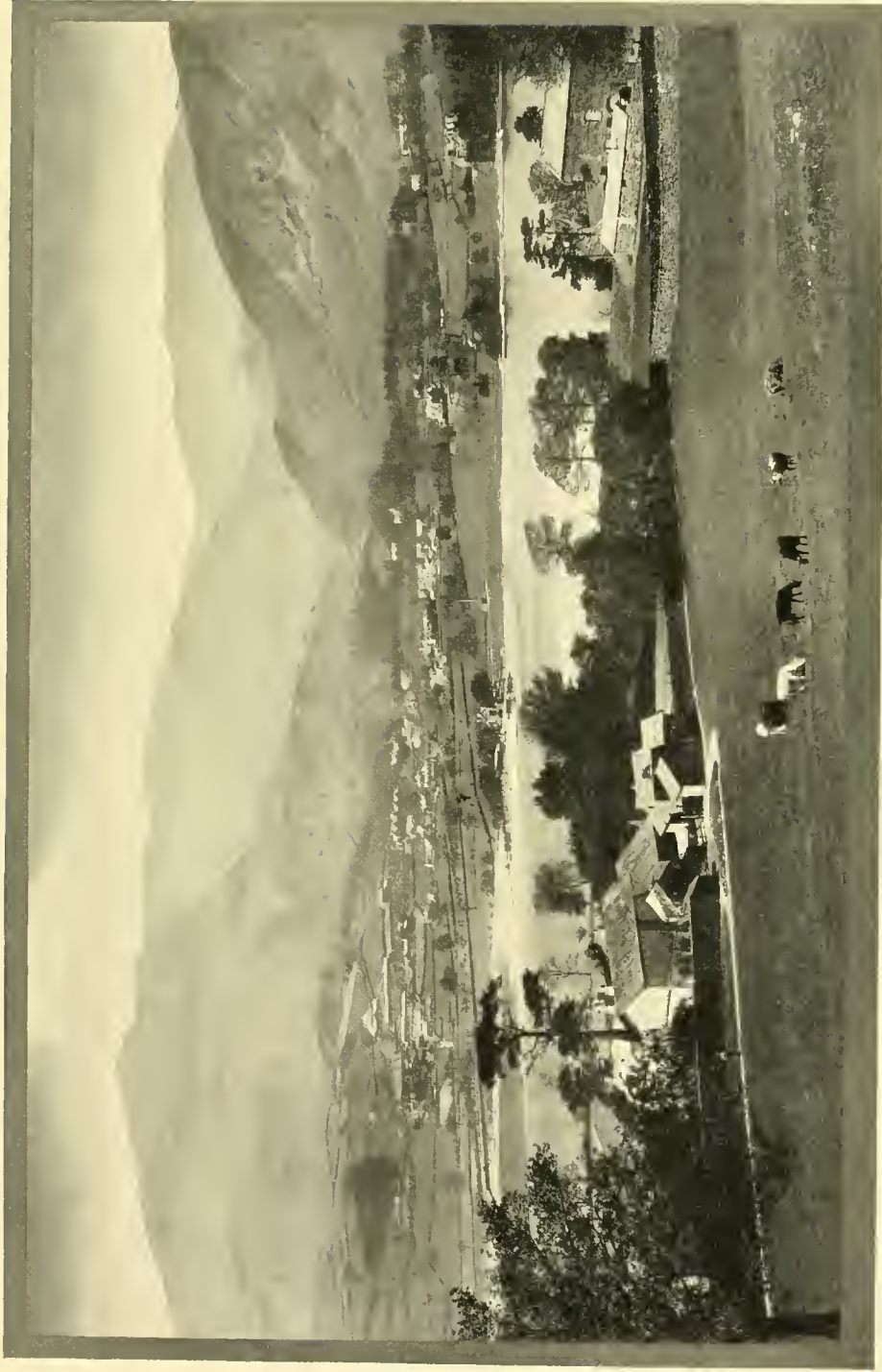
Coniston Lake.

The lake is about five miles long and not more than half a mile in width. On its Western side it is bounded by low, wooded slopes not unlike those at the lower end of Windermere, while on the opposite side, in great contrast, is seen the fine mountain—Old Man, whose peculiar name is a corruption of the Gaelic, *Alt Maen*, the High Rock. Below its rugged escarpments nestles the village of Coniston with its church, railway-station and other signs of a thriving tourist centre.

In the church-yard, beneath the fine runic cross, carved with figures symbolical of his writings, is laid to rest John Ruskin, whose name will for all time be most closely associated with this lovely spot. His home, Brantwood, is on the east side of the Lake, about two miles from the village and a mile from Tent Lodge, where Tennyson once resided.

The Furness Railway Company, under the management of Mr. Alfred Aslett, a veritable genius of organization and enterprise, has placed a comfortable steam yacht on Coniston, as well as a most picturesque gondola, and these ply continuously throughout the summer months from Waterhead to Lake Foot. The sail down the lake is one of great beauty, affording magnificent near views of the Old Man, and Dow Crag, with Fairfield, Helvellyn, Red Screes and other Lakeland giants peering over the coronal of wood at the head of the lake. Brantwood, Tent Lodge, the ivy-covered Coniston Hall and other farmsteads are in sight from the water and lend to the scenery an air of domesticity. The view from Beacon Crag, the eminence overlooking the foot of Coniston, commands the entire length of the lake with its glorious background of mountains and is second to none in the district.

If we take the main road past the head of Coniston, in an easterly direction, and follow it up the steep rise to High Cross,



Coniston Lake

And the mountain Old Man, on the breast of which is situated the village of Coniston.
The view is taken from near Brantwood, Ruskin's home.

Hawkshead.

beautiful peeps of Coniston are seen through the woods. Above us on the moor is the romantic sheet of water, Tarn Hows, the favourite stroll of all Coniston *habitues*. The main road continues over the hill, however, and in another mile reaches the quaintest and most old-world village imaginable. This is Hawkshead. Its old market square, pillared houses with outside stairs, quaint nooks entered by roadways passing under the houses, to say nothing of the centuries-old church, and the grammar school, with the actual desk at which Wordsworth learnt his lessons, are at once interesting and amusing. An old epitaph in the Church-yard, visited from far and near, ran as follows:—

“This stone can boast as good a wife
As ever lived a married life,
And from her marriage to her grave
She was never known to misbehave.
The tongue which others seldom guide
Was never heard to blame or chide,
From every folly always free,
She was what others ought to be.”

It is sad to reflect that the above was erased by the lady's sons-in-law, for the prosaic reason that “it wasn't true”! To Hawkshead belongs Esthwaite Water, a reposeful sylvan lakelet, quite different from the more northerly meres, but nevertheless very alluring in its own way, with distant Langdale Pikes and Bowfell a shimmering, almost unreal, background.

In actual distance it is not far from Hawkshead to Wastwater, but there is an entire contrast in the character of their scenery. Wastwater is the grandest of the lakes and is possessed of a wild, sombre beauty. Grouped around its head are Scawfell, Great Gable, Kirk Fell, Yewbarrow and the wild mass of the Pillar, the highest and most rugged of Lakeland's mountains while—rising

Wastwater.

directly from the very edge of the water—the boulder-strewn slopes of the Screes, crowned at a height of 1,000 feet by magnificent bastions of rock, confine the southern side of the lake in almost its entire length. It is a very weird sensation to row along the lake under these Screes and see them plunge straight down into the water, until they merge into the blackness of its depths. This is the deepest of the lakes, and the steep angle of the mountain is continued under water for two hundred and fifty-eight feet. Wastwater is open to the west, whence an excellent road leads from Seascale, on the Furness Railway, up to Wastdale Head, the small village about a mile beyond the head of the lake.

Wastdale Head is almost entirely enclosed; indeed Will Ritson, the erstwhile landlord of the hotel and a great character, used to say that “t’ view frae Wastdale Heed was ’tpoorest he knew, for yan could see nowt for t’ mountains”! Many famous men have foregathered here in times past; it has appealed to natures as different as those of Darwin and Ruskin, Sir Walter Scott and Turner, Wordsworth and Professor Sedgwick, all of whom visited it many times. Will Ritson was the contemporary of these visitors and many are the tales told of the jovial times they had. Christopher North and Auld Will, as he was called, wrestled together and the Professor got the worst of three falls, but Auld Will owned that he was “a verra bad ’un to lick.” Christopher North got even with his conqueror next day, however, when, with some other dalesmen, they went on the lake together. When they were well away from the shore, the Professor fell overboard and sank like a stone. Auld Will was terribly upset and, with his companions, did all he could to rescue him when he came to the surface. But the Professor plunged about to such an extent that for long they could not get hold of him. At last one of them seized him round the neck and held him up, where-



Wastwater and Great Gable
"A Gathering Storm."

Ascent of the Needle.

upon the drowning man burst into laughter and climbed over the side of the boat. He was an excellent swimmer and the whole business was just a prank to get even with Auld Will!

There were merry times at Wastdale in those days, and although the old figures have departed, their place is nowadays taken by another and vastly increased generation of mountain lovers. These are the rock climbers and mountaineers, whose Mecca is the Wastwater Hotel. At Christmas, Easter and other holiday times, the valley is full to overflowing, and climbing enthusiasts, who include 'Varsity Dons, Members of Parliament and distinguished Barristers, are glad to get accommodation on the billiard table, in the bath room, or even in the barn. Early in the morning, they set out with ropes intent upon their various climbs, Scawfell Pinnacle, the famous Pillar Rock or the Needle on Great Gable.

A very favourite climb is this latter, short but exceedingly difficult and only for those of long experience. The way lies up the crack seen in the illustration and it is climbed by wedging the knee in this crack, whilst the hands grasp its rough edges above one's head. The leader, who should be an uncommonly good cragsman, attaches the rope round his waist and when he has attained the top of the crack, rests there and takes in the rope as the next climber ascends. It is just kept taut so that in case of a slip the second man comes to no harm. When he has joined his leader, the latter climbs a stage higher to the next platform, and the performance is repeated. Then comes the crux of the climb. The top boulder overhangs considerably on one side, and the way lies up the almost vertical right-hand outline seen in the photograph. The hand—and footholds are very small, the situation is most exposed and it demands not only great gymnastic skill, but a perfectly cool and daring nerve to lead up this last bit. Once there the leader sits down—the top

A Rock-Climbing Adventure.

is about a yard square and by no means level—and takes in his companion's rope. The descent can be made by reversing this route or by a more exposed ridge on the other side.

I recall a very unpleasant experience of my own on the Needle. It was on the bitterly cold Christmas day of 1897, that a party of three of us climbed to its apex. We had no sooner arrived there than it came on to rain and as the rain fell it froze immediately on the rock; the Needle became almost like a huge inverted icicle. I essayed the descent, but the small handholds near the top were veneered with ice. It was quite impossible, so, with great difficulty, I regained my companions on the top. By this time a driving wind had sprung up and it behoved us to descend at once, or else be frozen and then blown off. It was an unpleasant dilemma, but we got out of it in the following manner. The strongest man of the party lowered first one and then the other of us, swinging round and round on the rope end like a spider at the end of its clew, until we reached the neck between the Needle and the mountain, seen in the illustration. Then the last man tied his rope round the top of the rock and came down hand over hand for about twenty feet, when off slipped the rope from the top and he came tumbling down on to us. Fortunately he retained his grasp of the rope and, as we were tied to the other end, we were able to arrest his fall before he had gone far. Beyond a severe shaking he was no worse, and this, with a bruised shoulder where his boot struck me as his body flew through the air, was all the damage sustained in our escapade.

For those whose ideas of exercise lie in a milder direction, the walk up Great Gable or Scawfell Pike, the highest English mountain, will suggest itself. The views from these summits are magnificent in every direction and embrace the wild fastnesses of the Pillar, the silvery light over the sea, where the Isle of Man glimmers in the



An ascent of The Needle Rock, Great Gable



Furness Abbey

General View showing the entrance to the Chapter House and the Cloisters.

Scawfell Pike.

distance, the soft beauties of Windermere, Derwentwater and Skiddaw, with Wastwater, "abode of gloom and congregated storms," in the valley at our feet. Auld Will used to do a bit of guiding when business was slack at the inn, and one day he accompanied a parson up Scawfell Pike. The fell side was stony and the going so rough that this gentleman was led to indulge in language that quite disgusted Auld Will, who had always a great respect for "the cloth." He said nothing in reproof, however, until he had seated his charge safely on the top of Scawfell Pike, when he stood back, mopped his brow and delivered himself to the parson as follows: "Theer, me man, thoo can mak t'maist o' that, for it's as near Heaven as thoo'll ivver get!"

No description of Lakeland could pretend to completeness without some reference, however brief, to the monastic ruins of Furness Abbey. From Wastwater to Seascale Station is twelve miles by road and thence the Furness Railway takes one in a very short time to the secluded Vale of Beckans Ghyll—a fitting retreat for an edifice which had for its chief object complete withdrawal from every-day life. This charm of aloofness and sequestration still hovers around the spot where the Abbots of Furness centuries ago, for the Abbey was founded by Stephen, in 1127, eschewed all-dealings with "the world, the flesh and the devil."

It ranks second to Fountain's Abbey in opulence and extent, but if we add beauty of detail, the ruins of Furness are equal to any in Great Britain. It was originally a filiation from the monastery of Savigny, in Normandy, which belonged to the order of Benedictines, but before many years had passed, the brethren entered the Cistercian order, changing grey for white habiliments. The chief abbot was endowed with great civil, as well as ecclesiastical influence. In his criminal courts, the power of life and death was

Furness Abbey.

his; he had control of the militia; every mesne lord was bound to contribute his quota of armed men at the Abbot's summons, and, save to the King, he was answerable to no man.

The hand of time has lain heavily upon some portions of the abbey, but sufficient can be deduced from "the roofless pile of ruins" to enable us to gather some conception of its original beauty and importance. Amongst its finest features are the deeply recessed trio of Transitional Arches; the Sedilia, with well-preserved canopies in the richest style of the Decorated Period; the northern gate of the Abbey, a really beautiful Gothic arch; the Chapter House, one of the most exquisite bits of early English architecture preserved to us, and the great East Window of the Choir or Chancel.

In addition to the Abbey itself, the little dell in which it is situated contains the hotel and railway station, and it redounds greatly to the credit of their designers, that neither of these mars the scenic effect of the landscape. In the hotel, amongst other topical mementoes, are some beautiful and very ancient *bas reliefs* and the Abbot's Room, an apartment which revives in all who visit it the atmosphere of Furness Abbey as it was in the days of its pristine glory.

Much remains to be said. Many picturesque spots have barely been mentioned, Haweswater, Loweswater and Ennerdale Water among others, and even if the tourist should spend six months in this wonderful district, his position will be very much that of mine in compiling this book. He will by no means have exhausted all its beauties

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